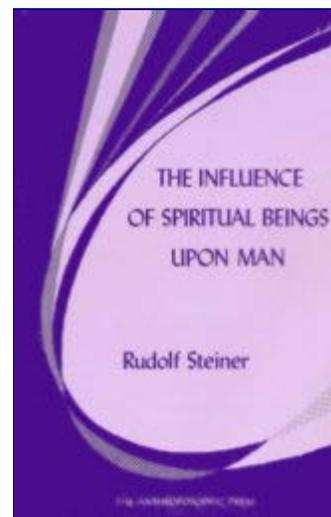




*A READER'S JOURNAL*

**The Influence of Spiritual Beings on Man,  
GA#102  
12 Lectures in Berlin in 1908  
by  
Rudolf Steiner**

Published by Steiner Archives on eLib in 2013  
A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2014  
Chapter: Spiritual Science



This is not an easy set of lectures to read for beginners to anthroposophy as Steiner takes us

through many levels of the spiritual world identified by names that are likely unfamiliar and some levels won't even have names associated with them, simply being one level or two lower than an identified level. A reference guide will be helpful when reading this book of lectures and this review of the book(1). By referring to the Sevens Table, one can begin to make sense of what it means that the egos of mineral exist today in the highest parts of Devachan while the ego is the newest acquisition for humans during the Earth condition of consciousness we are in currently. In the previous or Old Moon planetary embodiment, humans had a Group Soul, similar to what animals have during this stage of our evolution (Earth). What is a Group Soul? Steiner gives us a handy metaphor (pun intended) to grasp its meaning, namely, the image of a man placing his two hands through a curtain so that only his ten fingers show to the audience. The audience sees only ten individual "beings", but have no doubt that there is one man behind the curtain. We as humans today may see ten individual giraffes and imagine they each have a separate ego, but if we look behind the curtain, we find that, in truth, there is only one Group Soul behind the curtain, to which each giraffe returns upon his death. Each species of animal has a Group Soul, similar to our own status during our previous embodiment during the Old Moon when our evolution had only reached the animal stage of evolution.

**[page 2, 3](2) You will have gathered from the lectures given here recently that when we ascend with clairvoyance into the higher worlds we there meet with beings who, it is true, do not belong to our physical world, but who are in themselves so independent that we can describe them as 'persons' for those worlds, just as we call men here on the physical plane 'persons.' You have seen that groups of animals of the same species together belong to a group-soul or group-ego and that on the astral plane we come upon the lion-soul, the tiger-soul, and so on, as independent personalities whom we can meet there as we meet the human being on the physical plane. In the same way we find in still higher regions, on the devachanic plane, the egos of quite large plant groups, and in the highest parts of Devachan we find the egos of the minerals, personalities as distinct as men are here on the physical plane. We saw in this way that in these higher worlds we meet with certain beings who, so to speak, extend part of their organism, their separate members, down into the physical plane. If a man were to extend his fingers through openings in a curtain or partition we should only see the ten fingers, the man himself would be behind the partition. So it is with the group-egos of the animals. Here with the physical eye we see what is extended down below as members by higher beings of the**

**astral world, and the actual ego is behind the partition, behind that wall which separates the physical world from the astral world. And in a corresponding way this holds good for the other group-egos, the group-egos of the plant or the mineral world. When we raise ourselves from the physical world into higher worlds we meet not only these beings who have been described as extending their members down below here, but we meet a whole number of other beings who may equally well be considered personalities for those worlds, but whose physical members are not so directly visible and evident as those of the group egos of animals, plants, and minerals.**

Why should we as human beings care about these spiritual beings which we cannot see with our present stage of consciousness, you might ask. For one thing, as the title of this book suggests, these beings have an influence on our lives. Yes, we can live pretending that the only important things in the world are those things we can experience with our material senses. Have we not done well since Bacon's time focusing only on our senses? Didn't we create all this technology using only our sense apparatus and our creative thinking? Yes, but if these spiritual beings affect us, shouldn't we strive to understand them as fully as materialist scientists strive to understand the way the material world affects us? If you answer yes to this last question, you are a nascent spiritual scientist, and reading these lectures will provide a bootstrap for you into understanding aspects of the world which ancient peoples perceived directly, but with our increased materialization since Bacon's time around the 14th Century, our direct perception of these spiritual realities has waned until few people can perceive them directly. With practice, the exercises Steiner provides in his books and lectures, however, one can begin to perceive these realities and with those new perceptions begin to *realize* the existence of the spiritual world. In other words, one will not begin to *believe* in the spiritual world, but *know* it as a fact of existence.

He explains that there are such beings on the Moon, on Mars, Venus, etc. which affect us. Here is an example.

**[page 4] Now all these beings who have been mentioned are by no means unconnected with our existence. Their deeds, activities, manifestations, are definitely extended into our life and their action is particularly to be traced by clairvoyance when certain conditions appear on earth. Thus the beings who — naturally as astral beings — are at home on the moon are present on earth in the most varied circumstances, when for instance a man falls a prey to illusionary ideas, or where insane people are gathered. Such astral beings show special preference for the neighborhood of insane asylums. They are, moreover, almost always to be found near mediums and somnambulists; these persons have such beings swirling round them, and a large proportion of the influences that are exercised upon them is derived from the presence of these creatures. Where on the other hand love and kindness prevail, where humanitarianism is unfolded, there you find the mild, gentle Mars beings present as astral creations, taking part in the forces which are there at work. That is nourishment for them, the atmosphere in which they can live and whence they exercise their influence on man.**

Jean Houston in her workshops liked to talk about people having *leaky margins*, indicating that what we thought about in private leaked out into the world and had an effect on other people. This seemed strange to me and hard to accept until I recalled how the private thoughts of love I had about a woman who lived a few houses down the street from me mirrored the thoughts she had of me during that same period of time. We don't often get access to such intimate information, but one revelation was enough for me to confirm the existence of those leaky margins of Jean Houston. I became convinced that such synchronous thoughts are the rule rather than the exception, that they all happen at the same time(3). When Del shares a thought with me, often I had been thinking the same thought and it is not possible to attribute to either of us the origin of the thought; we can only say they both happened at the same time, but one of us said it aloud first. What would your life be like, Good Reader, if you became aware that your most intimate thoughts leak out into the world and affect the people you are thinking about? Plus, along with your thoughts spiritual beings are also summoned. *There is none so blind as those who will not see* is an old

adage which expresses this form of unawareness.

**[page 4, 5] He who does not realize these things passes through life in complete blindness. We are not concerned here with mere theory or a theoretical challenge; all these things are directly practical. For man will only little by little in the future earthly evolution learn to act and frame his conduct on right lines, when he begins to recognize what creatures are summoned in response to certain deeds and circumstances. Everything that man does is like a summons to unknown beings. It is not only the insane or mediums that these moon beings — among whom are thoroughly malevolent little rascals, can venture to approach; when, for instance, young children are overfed in such a senseless way that they become greedy, then these beings can sidle up to them and spoil their development. You see then how necessary it is for man to know what he stirs up around him through his behavior and whole attitude in the world!**

Going back to the *fingers through the curtain* metaphor, you may have been glad to think that you don't have any fingers through the curtain controlling and shaping your existence, but you would be wrong. We humans during this stage of our evolution are gradually gaining control over our astral and etheric bodies with our ego, a process which when complete will change the astral body into *spirit-self* and the etheric body into *life-spirit*. Until this process is completed, various spiritual beings attach to the fluids in our physical body like spiritual parasites, like fingers through curtain they enter and flow through these fluids. Like a dirty room will attract flies, our partially-purified astral and ether bodies will attract parasites in the form of spiritual beings. Whether these are Moon beings or Mars beings makes a big difference in how we are inclined to act towards others and ourselves.

**[page 7] Just as in the case of the animals we saw that the astral group-ego extends its separate members into the separate lion-individuals, so these astral beings also extend their physical being here. They could not, however, extend it from outside into the physical plane; for this they need beings on the physical plane whose parasites they are, into whom they fasten and bore. They are here the parasites of men. If there were no human race here on earth they would very soon take their departure; they could find no dwelling place, it would not suit them here. But there are beings, men and higher animals, who have lymph and there these beings have their physical manifestation. Thus not merely a material substance pulses through our body but in such circulation move whole hosts of these beings. They revolve through man, move along through him and have their bodies in the lymph — whereas the actual human being, the ego-man has his body, to begin with, merely in the blood. And the preponderance of moon beings or Mars beings of this nature circling through a man gives his lymph its special character. If more moon beings circulate through his body he is a man who inclines more easily to wrong-doing, irritation, and anger, if more Mars beings, then he is a man who is more inclined to gentleness, kindness, mildness. You see how man is not traversed merely by fluids but also by spirits, and how one only understands man when one knows that spirits pass through him and not fluids merely.**

In our lungs a slow combustion takes place, like when oxygen combines with other substance during a fire. The lungs provide a counterpoint to the liver; the liver chains us to Earth and the lungs receive fire which rescue us from the Earth and leads us upward. Only by understanding this relationship between the lungs and the liver provided by spiritual science can we begin to rightly understand the myth of Prometheus.

**[page 10, 11] The myth says that Prometheus brought man fire from heaven and indicates in this way that Prometheus participates in the process which is expressed in the human breath and which leads man upwards. But a wonderful explanation is given: because Prometheus raises himself above the forces which chain man to the earth and opposes them, because he is the one to give man this force of the fire, therefore he must**

**suffer for it. The suffering is wonderfully represented as the fact underlying the Myth, namely, a vulture devours the liver of the fettered Prometheus. How could it be shown more finely and wisely that the forces streaming into us with the breathing process gnaw at the liver and that he who accomplishes in advance what is accomplished by mankind in a far future, stands there like a crucified one — how that which sinks down out of the air, eats into the liver!**

Over the Temple of Apollo were two famous dicta: *Know Thyself* and *Everything in Moderation*. How can one know oneself if one has knowledge *only* of the materialistic world and none of the spiritual world? That would be to miss the knowledge of one's soul and spirit and focus only upon one's body. Rudolf Steiner explains his *anthropo-sophy*, the *-sophy* or knowledge of the full *anthropos* or human being this way:

**[page 11] Thus, starting from the study of higher worlds we have come to recognize the actual mission of Spiritual Science. It is to enable man to learn to know life, and when he is working and creating to show him what is secretly working with him when he moves his hand, when he creates with spirit, soul, and body. Through spiritual knowledge he will become more and more conscious of the beings who are his companions, and will live and create with them in harmony. Thus spiritual research will reveal to him the fullness of reality and enable him to bring knowledge and wisdom into life.**

In Lecture II of January 27, 1908 Rudolf Steiner deals with the structure of our cosmos, how the sacrifice from great spiritual beings rain down up a localized space and create the seed of a new cosmos, a new Saturn, in which human beings begin as localized areas of warmth. As Saturn develops the Zodiac of stars surrounding it form into being and when we arrive at the stage of evolution we are today, what we observe and call the "universe" is but one bubble of localized evolution which we do best to call our cosmos. The Universe, if we would dare to talk about it, what Steiner calls "the cosmic All", would be like a "foam of soap bubbles" in which our observable cosmos is but one bubble(4). Our cosmos exists in time and the Zodiac exists in duration is one way Steiner describes the difference between our local soap bubble and the cosmic foam out of which it evolves. This is a continuous process of Saturn leading to Zodiac leading to another Saturn. So where did our Zodiac (all the stars we see in the sky as forming what we call our universe) come from?

**[page 14] It arose from the planetary system which preceded our own. Saturn itself was preceded by planetary evolutions in an age which, speaking in the sense of occult astronomy, can by no means be described as "time" as we understand time, for its character was rather different. But for the human mind today the concept is so fabulous that we have no word with which to express it. Speaking in analogy, however, we can say that the forces which preceded our planetary system in an earlier cycle of planetary existence went forth in the light-streams, and out of a small portion of matter gradually gathering together at the center, this first, dawn-condition of the Earth arose; this was ancient Saturn and the forces contained in the Zodiac radiated down upon it from the cosmic All.**

If we follow this process through a cycle, we find an alteration between "raining down" and "evaporation" and wonder whether we are still in the raining-down stage or if we have begun the stage of evaporation where we are beginning our ascent to the Zodiac.

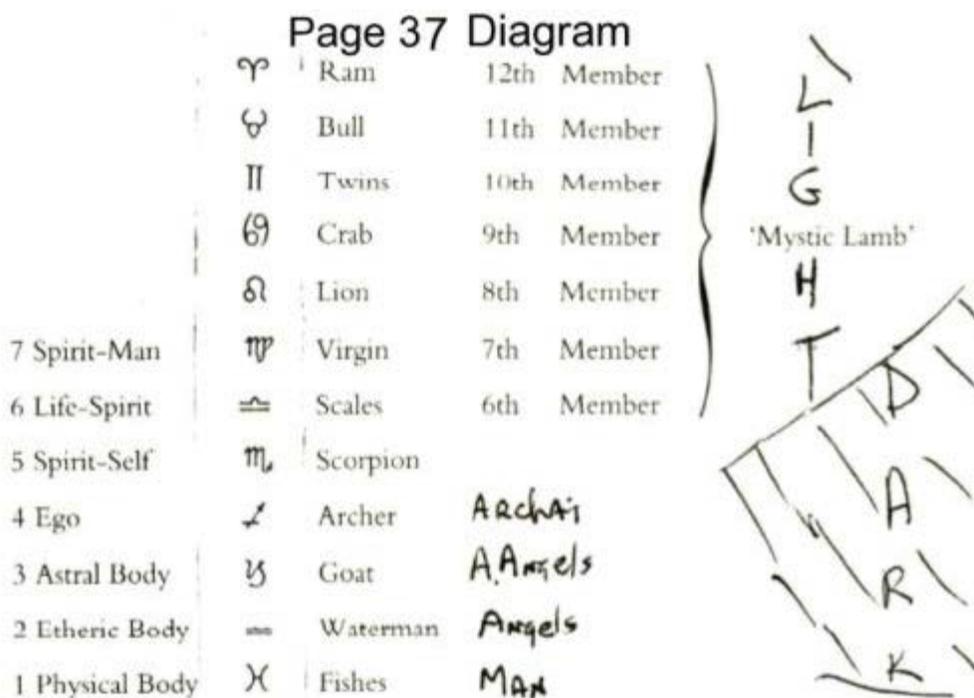
**[page 15] What has been achieved in a planetary existence and has become sun, ascends to "heavenly" existence, becomes zodiacal existence. And having reached zodiacal existence, what does it do? It offers itself in sacrifice! Please take account of this particular word. The first dawn-condition of the Earth, ancient Saturn, arose in a mysterious way as the result of sacrifice on the part of the Zodiac. The forces which caused the first, rarefied Saturn-masses to gather together were those which streamed**

**down from the Zodiac, producing on Saturn the first germinal inception of physical man. This continued without cessation. You must not picture it as happening only once. Fundamentally speaking, what is happening continuously is that within what we call a planetary system the forces which evolved to a higher stage after having themselves passed through a planetary system, are sacrificed. We can say in effect: what is at first contained in a planetary system evolves to a "sun" existence, then to zodiacal existence and then has the power to be itself creative, to offer itself in sacrifice within a planetary existence. The forces from the Zodiac "rain" down continuously into the planetary existence and continuously ascend again; for that which at one time became our Zodiac must gradually ascend again. The distribution of forces in our earth existence may be conceived as follows: — on the one side forces are descending from the Zodiac and, on the other, forces are ascending to the Zodiac. Such is the mysterious interplay between the Zodiac and our earth. Forces descend and forces ascend.**

Steiner makes it clear in this next passage that we have passed the middle-point and have begun the evaporation or ascending to the Zodiac stage.

**[page 15] As far as our human understanding goes, these forces began to descend during the Saturn-existence of our Earth and when the Earth-existence proper had reached its middle point, the stage had arrived when they gradually began again to ascend. We have now passed beyond the middle point of our evolution, which fell in the middle of the Atlantean epoch; and what human beings have lived through since then is a phase of existence beyond the middle point. In a certain sense, therefore, we may say that at the present time, more forces are ascending to the Zodiac than are descending from it.**

It was while I was reading and studying Prokofieff's [The Twelve Holy Nights](#) that I found this helpful diagram at on Page 37 and also found a reference to the lectures in this book, which led me to read and review it. This diagram which will help illustrate how when a human being matures to its full seven-fold bodies, it will have passed its Libra condition and have reached its raining-down condition, having moved from "the sphere of Time into the sphere of Duration".



We look up to Libra (the Scales) as the path we are set upon, but there is another who looks down to us from Aries (the Ram). This must be a spirit who prepares a great sacrifice for us. We can get a hint as to who this is by reviewing the so-called mythology associated with the sign of the Ram.

**[page 20] Just as man receives life into himself, so does this Being radiate life through the whole of our universe. This is the Being Who has the power to make the great sacrifice and Who is inscribed in the Zodiac as the Being Who for the sake of our world**

**offers Himself in sacrifice. Just as man strives upwards into the Zodiac, so does this Being send us His sacrificial gift from Aries — which is related to Him as Libra is related to man. And just as man turns his ego upwards to Libra, so does this Being radiate His very Self over our sphere in sacrifice. This Being is called the "Mystical Lamb," for Lamb and Aries are the same; therefore the description 'Sacrificial Lamb' or 'Ram' is given to Christ. Christ belongs to the cosmos as a whole. His I, his Ego, reaches to Aries and thus He becomes Himself the "Great Sacrifice," is related with the whole of mankind and in a certain sense the beings and forces present on the earth are His creations. The configuration of forces is such that He could become the Creator of these beings in the constellation of Aries, or the Lamb. The designation "Sacrificial Lamb" or "Mystical Lamb" is drawn from the heavens themselves.**

The global-warming alarmists are materialistic scientists who fill the airwaves with their dire predictions of increasing global temperatures causing catastrophic flooding, melting polar ice caps, and disappearing polar bears, among many other things. All this, in spite of evidence that the global temperatures have not increased in the past fifteen years, and the overall size Arctic ice caps in the past two years has increased at a record rate. I couldn't help but think of these so-called scientists when Steiner characterized modern science as huffing-puffing dwarves chasing far behind the facts. Here is the direct quotation:

**[page 21, 22] It could be said that the theories, opinions and knowledge that modern popular science forms from its own facts look like tiny, gasping, dwarf-like creatures which run puffing and blowing at a considerable distance behind the facts.**

In several places in other lectures, I have encountered Steiner stating that "evil is a good out of its time". No one should slough this thought off easily with a shrug of "Whatever" — rather, this is a wonderful statement to ponder and will reward those who think deeply on it. Often when something evil arrives, we notice over time that something good comes out of it. As one example, Hurricane Katrina seemed to be evil, but those of us living in New Orleans have seen massive changes for the better just as soon as the "running dwarves" of FEMA and other Federal agencies left town after the storm, and the people took over. The failed levee system has been greatly improved. The city now has all of its schools operating as charter schools with greatly improving graduation rates at many of them. Each of these an example of a good coming after what appeared to be an evil.

**[page 30] When something apparently destructive, retarding, and evil exists anywhere, then evolution in its whole course will be so wisely guided that even this evil, this destruction and hindrance will be reversed and changed into the good.**

Modern digital cameras are getting such high resolution that it is now possible to view people reflected in the eyeballs of someone's photograph. Imagine now if the image of someone reflected in an eyeball were able to step out of the eye and become independent, and you would have an example of what is meant by a "human made in the image and likeness of God".

**[page 32, 33] You can form an idea of what was present on Saturn as the physical germ of man, if you imagine a person standing before you and you look into his eye; you send your light into the eye of the other, and your picture comes back to you rayed out of his eye. So it was with the Spirits of Form in the environment of ancient Saturn. They sent their life-bestowing saps down into the warmth masses of Saturn and their own form, their likeness, was reflected; this mirror likeness was the first rudiments of the human physical body. Man was thus, even on ancient Saturn, in the most literal sense a likeness of his Godhead. . . . If you could endow with life the reflection which rays to you from the eye of your fellow man, make it independent, so that it had its own life and could step out of the eye, then you would have a deed which the Spirits of Form accomplished in the transition from ancient Saturn to the Sun. This was a significant advance for our cosmic evolution.**

Here Steiner gives us another example of the "huffing-puffing dwarves of modern science" who read the ancient myth of Chronos eating all his children and laugh at such childish prattle. But they are only projecting their childish view of reality, rightly understood.

**[page 33] Let us look at the advance that took place from Saturn to Sun. On ancient Saturn the life-giving forces streamed in, were reflected and taken up again by the mantle, the atmosphere of Saturn. In the old Greek myth the warm globe of Saturn was called Gaea and the atmosphere Chronos. Now consider the myth: the life-giving forces of Chronos rayed in continually upon Gaea and were reflected and absorbed. It is Chronos continually swallowing his own children! One must feel the truth of such a myth; if it is not felt, one has not the right attitude to it. For just consider what it means: in hoary primitive ages of ancient Greece we find a myth that presents this truth to us in a wonderful picture. There is only one possible explanation of such a fact, namely, the most advanced individuals of mankind, who guided man's further development from the Mystery centers, had exactly the same knowledge of world evolution as we give out today in anthroposophy. In the Ancient Mysteries they spoke of these things as we speak today; for the masses the truths were veiled in pictures and these pictures form what today we know as Mythology. In the face of such knowledge how extraordinary seem those people who believe that men have discovered truth only in the last forty years and that all knowledge possessed by men of earlier times is only childish fantasy. One must however describe it as a childish fantasy when it is emphasized again and again: "How marvelously advanced we are today!" That is the really childish picture!**

The Spirits of Wisdom controls the individuality of the human being, that is, the individual which enters a new personality upon a new birth; they relinquish to the Spirits of Love control of the human personality during life between birth and death. This is consonant with Earth's goal of impressing Love into human beings(5). The Spirits of Wisdom are so powerful that they had to separate from the Earth when it split off the Moon and stay with the Moon as it revolved around the Earth; this moderated the influence of the Spirits of Wisdom and allowed humans to develop as a suitable pace.

**[page 52] We have already pointed out that if the forces and beings which left the earth when the sun withdrew had remained united with the earth as they were originally, then man would have been obliged to develop at a tempo too rapid for him to endure. He would never have reached his evolution if the Spirits of Wisdom had been bound up with the earth as they were on the Moon. They had to remove to a distance and work from outside if man was to have the right speed in his development. Otherwise, no sooner was he born than he would have become old, he would go through his development at too rapid a tempo. I can make that clear to you in another way.**

The Spirits of Love led humans through the stages of love from Eros (romantic love) to familial (brotherly love) to agape (highest form of spiritual love).

**[page 52] Love had to be inaugurated in the lowest form as sex-love, in order to rise through the various stages and finally, when the perfected Earth has reached its last epochs, to be imprinted into man as pure, spiritual love. All lower love is schooling for the higher love. Earthly man is to develop love in himself, so that at the end of his evolution he may be able to give it back to the Earth, for all that is developed in the microcosm is in the end poured into the macrocosm. The wisdom which streamed into the Moon-men shines towards the earth-man as the wisdom which permeates his structure.**

The effect of the Spirits of Wisdom remaining in the Moon allowed a human individuality to gradually progress through multiple incarnations, as one gradually progresses in school, one grade, one set of learnings with each year, till we reach the culmination over 12 or more years we call graduation.

**[page 54] Thus we see how man's personality and his individuality are within two different tendencies and currents. That is important for the following reason. If the Spirits of Wisdom who are meant now, had, so to speak, arrogated authority to themselves, then that exuberant, vigorous development would have come about which one could also describe by saying that in a single incarnation man would have gone through, pressed together, all possible perfectings from all incarnations. That which the Spirits of Wisdom were to give, however, became distributed among all man's successive earthly incarnations**

Here is statement which will seem familiar, "They veiled their faces before the Mystical Lamb." (Page 54) We are now in a position to understand what this means. Does it mean perhaps that Christ as the Mystical Lamb is also the Sun Spirit, and we as humans must shield our eyes from the rays from the Sun? Yes, and even more.

**[page 54] For the "Mystical Lamb" is the Sun-Spirit Who holds the secret of lifting not only the spirits away from the earth but of redeeming the bodies, spiritualizing them, after many incarnations have been passed through. The possessor of the Love-Mystery is the Sun-Spirit Whom we call the Christ, and since He has an interest not only in the individuality, but directly in each single personality of the earth, we call Him the "Great Sacrifice of the Earth" or the "Mystical Lamb."**

In the Apostle's Creed we are taught to say that we believe in the "Resurrection of the Body" and from this one passage, many misleading images have arisen, such as the tombs opening up and human bodies arising in their original form, a well-meaning but materialistically-based and grossly erroneous projection of the real meaning of the resurrection on the last day.

**[page 55] It is called the "last crisis" and must be described as "Spiritualization" or, as it is popularly called, the "Resurrection of the Flesh." One must only understand these things in the true sense as given by occultism, then they cannot be attacked. Enlightened circles will not be able in any case to understand that matter could someday become quite different from matter. What could be called in the best sense of the word the "madness of materiality" will never be able to imagine that matter could one day be spiritualized that is, that someday something will come about which one calls spiritualization, the Resurrection of the Body, of the Flesh.**

People who believe in a physical human body resurrection to their very death in this lifetime have missed the point, but will luckily have future lifetimes in which to save themselves from their attachment to materiality.

During Martin Luther's time, the circadian human ability to see spiritual realities was fading. Luther had remnants of spiritual sight, as one can verify by his discussions with the devil. But Luther was aware of the imminent loss of that ability in the full of humanity and thus exhorted everyone to develop a religion based on faith, things not seen, but believed. Steiner, a prophet of our times, tells us that religion based on faith must soon fade away, replaced by a religion based on knowledge. The impact of this has yet to be understood by the world at large, but individuals studying the message of Steiner do not have to wait for the rest of the world, but can lead the rest of the world into this new form of religion based on knowledge.

**[page 58] So Christianity stands there, not as a religion which might be a national religion but, if it is rightly understood, as a religion of mankind. In that the Christian feels himself one with the "Father," soul confronts soul, no matter to what people or nation it belongs. All divisions must fall away under the influences of Christianity, and the Jupiter condition must be prepared under the influence of this principle. Christianity therefore has begun as a religion, for humanity was founded on religion. Yet religion must be replaced by wisdom, by knowledge. In so far as religion rests upon faith and is**

**not inflamed with the fire of full knowledge it is something that must be replaced in the course of humanity's progress. And whereas formerly man had to believe before he could come to knowledge, in the future full knowledge will shine with light and man will know and thence ascend to the recognition of the highest spiritual worlds. From religion mankind evolves to wisdom, glowed through by love. First wisdom, then love, then wisdom glowed through by love.**

It seems to me that the progression of religion goes through the same stages as those of love, beginning first with fiery passion (*Eros*), then brotherly and familial compassion, and finally the stage of spiritual love, *agape*, or "wisdom glowed through by love".

We have seen that our progress through becoming full human beings required that we work on our astral body to build up our spirit self (*Manas*), the work on our etheric body to build up our life spirit (*Budhi*), and finally to work on our physical body to build up our spirit man (*Atman*). But how are we to proceed with these tasks, have we no helpers? Yes, we have Angels, Archangels, and Archai to help us. To begin with, we each have a Guardian Angel which follows our individuality through successive personalities (lifetimes), in fact, that angel will stay with us until we reach the consciousness of an angel in the course of our individual evolution. (Page 72)

**[page 71] We have said that man has a physical body, an etheric body, an astral body and an ego and that he is now occupied in transforming his astral body so that it gradually becomes spirit-self. He is working on his other members as well, but the essential task of earthly existence consists in the full development of the spirit-self. The Angels have developed it already, they had developed it when Earth-existence began, and thus the Angels in the hierarchies of evolution are the spirits which guide this task of man — the transforming of the astral body into the spirit-self.**

How does the fruits of our development during one lifetime survive to our next lifetime? There is a popular expression that "What happens in Las Vegas stays in Las Vegas." That applies to our physical body: "What happens in our physical body stays in our physical body." That means, whatever happened during one lifetime to our physical body dissolves away at death with the physical body. But, consider our etheric body: "What happens in our etheric body stays around to seed our physical body in our next incarnation." Steiner explains to us how the angelic beings assist in preparing our body for its next incarnation.

**[page 72] Now we ask how they do this. — Let us remember here what happens after a man's death and how he has round him at first what we have called the memory panorama of the just completed life. This lasts for two or three days, it differs somewhat for individual persons. It lasts as a rule for about the length of time that the person could hold out without sleep. Different people vary very much in this: one is accustomed to sleep after every twelve hours and then his eyes close; another on the contrary could keep awake for four to five days. The memory-tableau lasts as long as the person can keep himself from sleeping. Then the etheric body dissolves and only an extract of it remains — the life-fruit of the past life. This is taken with him for the whole of the time that follows, is incorporated into his being and forms the basis for the upbuilding of the physical body in the next incarnation. He is enabled to build up his next body more perfectly, because he can make use of the fruits of his past life. Thus man has this life-essence and forms his next body out of it in the life that follows.**

Many of you have or have had pets which you care for and love, have you not? You get their shots, feed them, groom them, hold them, pet, and generally take care of them and love them. Let me ask you a strange question: How can your pets show their gratitude for all this loving attention? They can't talk to you, can they? And yet, by their loving looks and coming when you call, they can show you signs of their gratefulness. Now, for an even stranger question: How can you show gratitude to your Guardian Angel

who watches over you, follows you from one lifetime to another, steers you into the right decisions (as seen from its multi-lifetime perspective), and generally loves you? First, you need to be aware that you have a Guardian Angel, don't you? That it exists as a reality, that it's not some childhood fantasy you learned about in Sunday School or Catechism. Then when something good happens to you, simply say Thank You to your Guardian Angel.

**[page 72] Such an Angel being works in fact with every human individual, guiding him in his task of developing the spirit-self in the astral body. In a part of Christian doctrine it speaks of man's Guardian Angel and that is a conception completely corresponding to reality. They are the beings who create the harmony between the human individual and the course of earthly evolution until man will have advanced so far at the end of Earth's evolution that he can release his Angel. He will then himself have the consciousness of an Angel.**

When we visited San Michele, a chapel built by Dr. Axel Munthe atop Anacapri on the Isle of Capri off the coast of Naples in Italy, I was very impressed by the story of how the good doctor saw a sphinx in a dream and ventured to the mainland to fetch the granite sculpture and bring it back. He hired local farmers to haul the heavy object up the 777 steps to the [San Michele Chapel](#) (named after the Archangel Mi-cha-il) where it rests today looking down on the sapphire waters of Capri harbor a thousand feet below. At that time, I had no idea of the connection between archangels and sphinxes, but Steiner elaborates on that theme.



**[page 73] In reality there is a spiritual representative, an Archangel, who leads and directs the people as a whole. This Being reaches down into the animal world, and this was felt by the peoples, they felt it out of their instinct. The one folk dwelt here, the other there, and according to the different regions they occupied they had to make use of such and such animals. They felt instinctively that this was allotted to them by their folk-spirit. This spirit worked as far as the animal world, so that the ancient Egyptians, who experienced this very clearly, said: When we consider plant development, then the Angel is working into it; when we consider the animals, these are apportioned to us by the guiding spirit of the whole people. They therefore saw the power which supplied the animals to them as a sacred power and the way in which they treated the animals was an expression of this consciousness. They did not speak of Archangels but they had the same feeling about it, and it was this feeling that the Egyptians united with the animal worship. Moreover, where there was a consciousness of this spiritual connection, these spirits were not represented by pictures of earthly animals, though with animal images, as for instance the Sphinx, winged beasts, and so forth, which you find in the various images of the peoples.**

There are no elemental spirits. This may seem to be a strange statement to those who have encountered

the idea of elementals or beings possessing only body and soul that are invisible to our physical senses. The problem with using the term "elemental spirits" is that they do not possess spirit, only body and soul. (Page 80) It is therefore better to use the correct term which is *elemental beings*. We cannot see the *doer* when these beings are active in our world but we can see the *done*. In other words, things happen in our world due to influence of these elemental beings, but modern science denies their existence, choosing often the cop-out of calling their activity random events, coincidences, or anomalies, among other things. Science recognizes the *done*, but denies the presence of a *doer*.

**[page 80] Their existence is of course denied in our enlightened age, for man in his present phase of development cannot see them; one who wishes to see them must have progressed to a certain degree of clairvoyant consciousness. The fact that a thing is not perceptible does not mean, however, that it is not active in our world. The activity of these beings of body and soul plays very definitely into our world. What they do can very well be seen, but not the doers themselves.**

Banshees are a form of elemental being which was familiar to the men who built the Titanic. The shipfitters could hear the screeches from the bowels of the ship and knew they signaled a bad omen. The ship sailed and did not survive its maiden voyage as is well known. Elemental beings are completely amoral.

**[page 80] Apart from the fact that their body is invisible, they differ essentially from man in as much as one could never reasonably attribute to them any kind of moral responsibility. What one calls moral responsibility in man is entirely lacking in them; what they do, they do automatically, and at the same time it is not at all unlike what the human intellect, intelligence, does. They possess what one calls wit in the highest degree and anyone coming into touch with them can observe good proofs of this. Their nature prompts them to play all sorts of tricks on man, as every miner can tell you who has still preserved something of a healthy nature-sense — not so much the miners in coal mines as those in metal mines.**

We live in a world of many stages of existence, but only one of which is visible to our sensory perception. We can see our physical body, but we cannot see our own etheric body, astral body or ego. The same is true for stages of existence below the level of the physical body in which the various elemental beings reside. (To understand the following passage, assign the human being's members as ego=4, astral body=3, etheric body=2, and physical body=1.)

**[page 82] But beneath physical matter there are also sub-stances which cannot be seen. Of all matter only a middle strip or band is perceptible, just that strip which constitutes physical matter, perceptible to the physical eye. Just as substance continues upwards as physical foundation for the etheric and astral, so does it continue downwards and again becomes invisible. And now that we have considered the different members of the human being we shall be able to set before us the membering of these other beings.**

What we call elemental beings lack an ego, but they have developed a principle below the physical body. We can say, therefore, that the principles 3, 2, 1 and minus 1 are developed in them. But there are not only beings which begin at the third principle. We have also those which begin at 2 and then have minus 1 and minus 2. And then we have still others whose highest principle is the same as man's lowest. They have developed 1, minus 1, minus 2 and minus 3. If they have a physical body it must be an invisible one.

To understand how these elemental beings come into existence, Steiner builds us an image of a man who takes "the sixteen paths of perdition" (Page 84) with the result that he can no longer find a suitable body in which to incarnate in his seventeenth incarnation and must become invisible to the other humans, being relegated to the order of a nature-spirit or elemental being.

**[page 85] Now let us take an extreme case and imagine that a man unites too fully with**

**what is to constitute the character of an incarnation. Let us suppose he reaches what is to be reached in sixteen incarnations; he takes the sixteen false paths. The earth does not wait for him, the earth goes forward and he finally arrives at a point where he can no longer incorporate in a human body, for none are in existence. There will be no more bodies in which souls that have grown too much involved in their bodily nature can incarnate. Such souls lose the possibility of incarnation and find no other opportunity. Just think what they will have lost. It is possible, but only in exceptional cases, that even during Earth evolution souls will be unable to incarnate because there are no more bodies bad enough. These men have gone so far that they have no other opportunity of incarnating in the normal course of evolution. Let us suppose such beings should remain on the earth — it will only be single cases. And now, since the later is the fruit of the earlier, these would then find no bodies suitable for them. They are, as it were, too good for the bodies of a subordinate order and for the other bodies they are too bad. They must therefore live a bodiless existence. They must cut themselves off entirely from the progress of evolution. Why have they deserved this? By reason of the fact that they have not made use of life! The world is around them; they have possessed senses in order to perceive the world, to enrich the life-kernel and mold it to a higher stage. They do not advance with world evolution, they re-main behind at a certain stage. Beings that stay behind at such stages appear in a later epoch with approximately the character of the earlier age. They have grown together with it, but not in the forms of the later epoch. They appear in a later epoch as subordinate nature-spirits.**

During Atlantean times, humans experienced a heavy mist by day and lived in fairy tales by night. With the end of the Atlantean epoch, the mist fell to Earth and the sky cleared up allowing humans to see the outlines and exterior of objects for the first time. The rainbow in the sky which Noah saw was recorded in the Bible to signal the beginning of post-Atlantean human being with waning clairvoyance and increasing clear, light-of-day consciousness and a new form of sleeping unconsciousness which we have yet today. Compare our present day and night condition with that of Atlantean times.

**[page 93] When the physical and etheric bodies lie in bed, the astral body with the ego lifts itself out and what one calls the modern consciousness sinks into an indefinite darkness. In the morning when the astral body and the ego draw again into the other members they make use of the physical organs and consciousness lights up. This condition of daily waking in consciousness, nightly sleeping in unconsciousness, did not exist formerly. When it was daytime and man dipped down into his physical body, as far as was the case then, he by no means saw physical beings and objects in definite boundaries as he does today. He saw everything with vague outlines just as you do when you go along the streets on a foggy evening and see the lamps surrounded with a misty aura. That was the way the human being of that time saw everything.**

That was his day-time experience; what was his night-time experience? Do we have writings which describe those to us today? Yes, in our fairy tales and ancient myths inhabited by various gods.

**[page 93] When the human being passed out of the physical and etheric bodies during the night, no absolute unconsciousness came over him, it was only a different kind of consciousness. At that time man was still aware of the spiritual processes and spiritual beings around him, not clearly and exactly as in true clairvoyance, but with a last relic of ancient clairvoyant sight. Man lived by day in a world of hazy, nebulous outlines, in the night he lived among spiritual beings who were around him as we have the various objects around us today. There was thus no sharp division between day and night, and what is contained in saga and myths is not some folk-fantasy but memories of the experiences which early man had in the supersensible world in his then state of consciousness. Wotan or Zeus or other supersensible spiritual divinities who were known to various peoples are not fabrications of fantasy as is asserted at the council-board of**

**erudition. Such assertions can only be made by someone who knows nothing of the nature of folk-fantasy. It does not in the least occur to early peoples to personify in that way. Those were experiences in ancient times. Wotan and Thor were beings with whom man went about as today he goes about with his fellow-men, and myths and sagas are memories of the ages of ancient clairvoyance.**

As we close this review, there are two concepts that Steiner allows us to grasp: 1) Every lie is a murder and 2) Naturalistic art creates spiritual blindness and deafness.

The devastating effects of a lie on oneself and on others is graphically portrayed in the movie, "Ghost". A stock broker manipulates money and tells lies to his friend which leads to his friend's death and his own death.

**[page 103] We all know the deep significance of the statement: "Regarded from the spiritual-scientific aspect a lie is a kind of murder." I have explained that a sort of explosion really takes place in the astral world when man utters a lie — even, in a certain way, if he only thinks it. Something takes place in the spiritual world when man lies, which has a far more devastating effect for that world than any misfortune in the physical world. But things which one relates at a certain stage of spiritual-scientific observation, characterizing them as far as is possible then, gain more and more clearness and confirmation when one advances in the knowledge of spiritual science.**

After the stock broker's murdering henchman dies when a speeding car hits him in the street, we see dark phantoms rise up out of the shadows to carry his detached spirit away. Later when stock broker dies, we see these same dark phantoms come for him.

**[page 104] Here we have again detachment processes and they lead to the fact that when a man dies his physical body does not merely follow the paths which it would normally take. Certain beings are left behind, beings which have been created in the physical body through the effect of lying and slander, and have been detached from the spiritual world. Such beings, detached in this circuitous way, now flit and whirl about in our world and belong to the class that we call "phantoms." They form a certain group of elemental beings related to our physical body and invisible to physical sight. They multiply through lies and calumnies, and these in actual fact populate our earthly globe with phantoms.**

Clearly, Steiner says, we must encourage our spiritual life to grown strong enough to overcome the ghosts, phantoms, and demons, etc. which the world creates around us. He says that "Someday men will understand how to build a railway-station so that it streams out truth like a temple and is in fact simply an expression suited to what is within it." (Page 107) One can imagine entering such a train station and hearing an announcement, "Truth rolling out on Track No. 9!"

Steiner asks us to compare the naturalist artist and the true artist. The former knows nothing of the spiritual realities and the later embodies spiritual realities in their art.

**[page 114] The man whose whole interest is merged in the external physical world, in what his external senses hold alone to be of value, works so strongly on his astral bodily nature through this exclusive interest in the physical world, that this becomes blind and deaf when it is in the spiritual worlds at night. The sublimest sphere sounds may resound, the loftiest spiritual tones may whisper something to the soul, it brings nothing back with it into the life of day. And then men scoff at idealistic, at spiritual art, and maintain that art's sole purpose is to photograph outer reality, for there alone it has solid ground under its feet. That is the way the materialist talks since he knows nothing of the realities of the spiritual world.**

**The true artist talks differently. He perhaps will say: When the tones of the orchestra sound to me, it is as if I heard the speech of archetypal music whose tones sounded**

**before there were yet human ears to hear them. — He can say too: In the tones of a symphony there lies a knowledge of higher worlds which is loftier and more significant than anything which can be proved by logic, analyzed in conclusions.**

When we arrive on Earth in a new incarnation, we find things realized already in the world around us which we had worked toward in our previous lifetime.

**[page 116] What we have in the hours when we are together, let us imagine expanded outwardly, carried forth into the world. Then we have the impulses which we should have when we are conscious that spiritual science is no hobby for individuals sitting together, but something that should be carried out into the world. The souls who sit here in your bodies will find, when they appear in a new incarnation, many things already realized.**

In these lectures, Steiner lays out for all to see the manifold variety of Spiritual Beings and the influence that they have upon us human beings. We can learn how these beings work, how they affect us for bad or good, how we can shape our own lives to foster their good graces and how we can show our appreciation for the help and guidance they provide to us as we strive forward in our evolution into full human beings in every sense of the word.

~^~

----- *Footnotes* -----

**Footnote 1.**

This Sevens Table can prove useful for keeping these levels straight in one's mind.  
<http://www.doyletics.com/7stable.htm>

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

**Footnote 2.**

Note that the page numbers in this review are handy for positional reference, but only refer to the pagination of the volume of the lectures from eLib which I printed out for the purposes of this review.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

**Footnote 3.**

I formulated this thought as Matherne's Rule [No. 4](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

**Footnote 4.**

This soap-bubble model of the Universe came to me from Itzhak Bentov in his books back in the 1970s, *Stalking the Wild Pendulum* and *A Cosmic Book*. It was only through my study of anthroposophy that I began to grasp the meaning of Bentov's model, that our observable universe, our cosmos, comprises one of the bubbles in a great foam of bubbles.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

**Footnote 5.**

On page 51, Steiner writes that in occultism we call the Moon the "Cosmos of Wisdom" and the Earth the "Cosmos of Love."

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)

**To Obtain your own Copy of this Reviewed Book, Click on SteinerBooks Logo below:**

